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Letter dated 29 September 2014 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to refer to the letter dated 16 July 2014 from the President of the Security Council in which the members of the Council requested me to conduct an assessment mission by 1 October 2014 on the progress that Liberia has made towards meeting the conditions set out in Council resolution 1521 (2003) for the termination of sanctions, and to provide recommendations on United Nations and other technical assistance to the Government of Liberia in improving its capacities to undertake the proper management of arms and ammunition, including enacting the necessary legislative frameworks, and facilitating the effective monitoring and management of the border regions between Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire (S/2014/504). The assessment is attached (see annex).

In the wake of the Ebola virus disease crisis in Liberia, the assessment was carried out from Headquarters in New York principally through video- and teleconferences with relevant interlocutors. The assessment team was composed of representatives of the Department of Political Affairs, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, the Office for Disarmament Affairs, the United Nations Mission in Liberia and the Panel of Experts on Liberia.

(*Signed*) **BAN** Ki-moon

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Annex

Assessment mission concerning the Liberia sanctions regime

From 5 to 12 September 2014, the assessment team held consultations with the following: the Government of Liberia;[1] representatives of China, France, the Russian Federation and the United States of America to Liberia; the United Nations country team in Monrovia; the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa, in Lomé; the United Nations Office for West Africa; the Peacebuilding Support Office of the United Nations; the Group of Experts on Côte d'Ivoire; and the Commission of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). The assessment team also met my Special Representative for Liberia and Head of the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL), Karin Landgren, and the Deputy Permanent Representative of Côte d'Ivoire to the United Nations.

Key findings

The incremental gains achieved by Liberia over the past 11 years in the consolidation of peace and the rebuilding of State institutions, with the assistance of the United Nations and other international partners, have been accompanied throughout by the targeted sanctions measures contained in Security Council resolution 1521 (2003). The centrality of those measures in ensuring the stability of the country has arguably reduced over time, but so too have the measures themselves, which have been adjusted gradually during the length of the sanctions regime.

In its resolution 1521 (2003), the Security Council expressed its readiness to end the sanctions based on a determination that the separate and specific conditions for each measure were being met. This is the third review that the Council has requested to assess progress made towards meeting the conditions for the termination of sanctions measures (see S/2004/428 and S/2005/376).

The situation in Liberia has changed dramatically since the Security Council requested this assessment. As described in my letter dated 28 August 2014 to the President of the Council (S/2014/644), the Ebola outbreak, which began as a medical emergency, has become more complex. The political, security and humanitarian implications of the epidemic are significant and dynamic. My Special Representative, in her briefing to the Council on 9 September 2014, noted that the Ebola crisis had revealed institutional weaknesses, including in the security sector. Senatorial elections might be postponed until December, and the constitutional reform and decentralization processes have slowed down. The deployment and specific conduct of military personnel with respect to the Ebola crisis, particularly with the implementation of state-of-emergency measures, have also raised some human rights concerns. My Special Representative has also observed challenges in coordination among security agencies in the response to the Ebola virus disease. The epidemic has already significantly weakened previously built Government capacity and has the potential to reverse the gains achieved in the national security sector

[1] The Ministry of National Defence, the Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization, the Executive Protection Service, the National Security Agency, the Liberia Refugee Repatriation and Resettlement Commission, the Liberia National Commission on Small Arms, the Liberian national police, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of State/Office of the President and the Permanent Mission of Liberia to the United Nations.

reform process. The response to Ebola is overstretching the limited capacity of Liberian security forces, which may be completely overwhelmed if the disease spreads significantly to the security forces themselves.

Against this backdrop of crisis management and fragility, it will be many months before the Government of Liberia and many of its international partners can focus on the recommendations contained herein. In that regard, the Security Council may wish to consider deferring any adjustments to the existing sanctions measures (arms embargo on non-State actors, asset freezes and travel bans) for six months or until the current situation in the country stabilizes and the Government and its partners are better able to implement the capacity-building efforts proposed in the present document. Given the importance of continued monitoring of the border regions, however, should the Council decide to further adjust the current monitoring arrangements for sanctions on Liberia, it may also wish to consider mandating the Group of Experts on Côte d'Ivoire with monitoring cross-border militia and mercenary activities, in particular until the elections to be held in 2015 in Côte d'Ivoire have been completed.

Progress made by Liberia towards meeting the conditions set out in Security Council resolution 1521 (2003) for the termination of sanctions

On 22 December 2003, the Security Council imposed sanctions measures on Liberia in connection with arms, diamonds and timber. It also adopted targeted measures on designated individuals in relation to travel. On 12 March 2004, by its resolution 1532 (2004), the Council decided that States should freeze the assets of designated individuals and entities. The establishment of a new sanctions regime reflected changes on the ground since the sanctions measures contained in Council resolution 1343 (2001) were first imposed: the departure of former President Charles Taylor from Liberia, the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement and progress made with regard to the peace process in Sierra Leone.

The new sanctions regime reflected the commitment of the Security Council to use sanctions measures to protect the nascent political transition in Liberia; to stem the proliferation of armed non-State actors, including mercenaries, and the trafficking in illegal arms; and to end the illegal exploitation of and illicit trade in natural resources. Targeted travel bans were imposed against designated individuals who constituted a threat to peace and stability in Liberia and the subregion, including senior members of the Government of former President Charles Taylor, their spouses and former members of the Liberian armed forces who retained links to the former President. Targeted financial sanctions (asset freezes) were adopted against individuals and entities misappropriating funds and property to interfere in the restoration of peace and stability in Liberia and the subregion.

Conditioned removal of the measures on natural resources

Through the sanctions measures imposed to protect natural resources, the Security Council was able to effectively encourage the Government of Liberia to undertake specific, time-bound steps to ensure greater accountability and transparency regarding the use of those national assets. The conditional removal of measures related to timber and diamonds and the review by the Council every six months has allowed the Government to demonstrate its political commitment to reforms in this sector. Similarly, the fact that the Panel of Experts continued to

monitor the situation throughout 2013, after the sanctions regarding timber and diamonds were lifted in 2006 and 2007 respectively, highlighted the Council's determination that progress would not be eroded. The institutional reforms required by the Council in the natural resources sector that were ultimately put in place also served to support ongoing work by UNMIL in extending State authority throughout the country.

Timber embargo

Termination of the timber-related embargo was conditional on the ability of the National Transitional Government of Liberia to exert its full authority and control over timber-producing areas. Concomitantly, the Transitional Government needed to undertake all steps necessary to ensure that government revenues from the timber industry were not used to fuel conflict but, rather, to benefit the Liberian people, including for development.

After elections were held successfully and President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf was inaugurated in January 2006, the new Government of Liberia demonstrated clear efforts to meet the conditions for lifting sanctions regarding timber. It promulgated Executive Order No. 1, which voided all forest concessions that failed to comply with the rule of law, and created the Forest Reform Monitoring Committee. That piece of legislation addressed concerns raised by both the Panel of Experts and the Liberia Forest Initiative,[2] such as the weak capacity of the Forestry Development Authority to manage the timber sector, lack of control over timber resources and overlapping and undocumented timber concessions.

Citing that effort, on 20 June 2006 the Security Council adopted its resolution 1689 (2006), by which it decided not to renew the prohibition on the importation by States of all round log and timber products from Liberia. The Council also decided to review the decision after a period of 90 days, with a view to reinstating the measures should forestry legislation proposed by the Forest Reform Monitoring Committee not be passed. A reinstatement of the ban on timber was obviated by the passage of the National Forestry Reform Law for the management of the timber sector in October 2006.

Despite the termination of timber-related sanctions, the Security Council continued to monitor natural resource governance by mandating the Panel of Experts to assess the extent to which natural resources were contributing to peace, security and development, rather than instability, in the country. From 2006 to 2013, the Panel identified various natural resource governance issues, notably the illegal allocation of forest resources through the misuse of private use permits. The Panel observed a significant increase in the issuance of private use permits in 2011 and, in 2012, uncovered widespread illegal activity that circumvented the formal concessions process. The fact that the Council paid attention to this issue, even in the absence of targeted measures regarding natural resources, provided the catalyst for Executive Order No. 44 of 4 January 2013, which suspended the issuance of private use permits and any activity related to timber felling or exporting under such licences. In addition, the President commissioned a national investigation, the results of which confirmed the findings of the Panel regarding massive irregularities

[2] A multilateral initiative launched to help the Forestry Development Authority of Liberia to improve governance and transparency in the timber sector.

associated with the allocation of such permits. The investigation led to the suspension of a number of officials in the forestry sector and could result in criminal prosecutions. The Government has instituted a review process that has led to many private use permits being cancelled and the possibility that all such permits may eventually be nullified.

Similarly, through the sanctions regime, the Security Council laid the groundwork for United Nations and other international engagement to tackle issues such as illegal pit sawing, fraud and misappropriation of timber revenues, resolution of land and tenure rights, the commercial concession allocation process and requirements for public participation and transparency, for example through the Liberia Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative.

Diamond embargo

Termination of the diamond embargo was conditional on the establishment of a transparent, effective and internationally verifiable certificate-of-origin regime for Liberian rough diamonds.

When the civil war ended in 2003, Liberia lacked a functioning system of internal and export control and was therefore unable to participate in the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme. The conditions set out in the sanctions regime paved the way for Liberia to join the Kimberley Process. In September 2004, legislation on diamonds was adopted and, in 2006, regional offices of the Ministry of Lands, Mines and Energy and a Kimberley-compliant certificate were created. UNMIL helped to train, equip and deploy mineral inspectors and mining agents to implement the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme procedures. After a review by officials of the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme concluded that Liberia had made significant progress towards compliance with the Scheme, the Council decided, in its resolution 1753 (2007), to terminate the measures regarding diamonds.

Nevertheless, the Security Council maintained its focus on the diamond sector until the end of 2013 by mandating the Panel of Experts to assess compliance by the Government with the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme and the extent to which diamond extraction was contributing to peace and development, rather than instability.

Notwithstanding the successful application by Liberia to join the Kimberley Process, it was clear that further action would be required in the longer term. This included building capacity and training officials working on the implementation of the Kimberley Process, such as Government Diamond Office staff, mineral inspectors, mining agents and customs, police, immigration, banking and finance officials. Further improvement with regard to the regulation of natural resources was also necessary owing to the remoteness of the sites of operations and the weakness of the infrastructure. In assessing government compliance with the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme between 2007 and 2013, the Panel focused on improvements to the internal control system. Because of capacity and infrastructure constraints, diamond trafficking throughout Liberia remains an ongoing concern. The Panel, in cooperation with UNMIL, provided advice on the creation of Kimberley-compliant governance structures, thus establishing a good basis for the Government to make progress in this area.

Amendments to the arms embargo over time

The arms embargo has remained in effect since 2003 but has been adjusted by the Security Council to reflect improvements in the security situation in Liberia and the efforts of UNMIL and bilateral donors to effect meaningful security sector reform. A gradual easing of the embargo on weapons and ammunition supplies to the Government, coupled with ongoing monitoring and inspections, has tested the capacity of the Liberian security sector and highlighted some gaps. It does not appear, however, to have affected the gains already made.

In paragraph 5 of its resolution 1521 (2003), the Security Council expressed its readiness to terminate the measures imposed in relation to the arms embargo and the travel ban when it determined that the ceasefire in Liberia was being fully respected and maintained, that the disarmament, demobilization, reintegration, repatriation and restructuring of the security sector had been completed, that the provisions of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement were being fully implemented and that significant progress had been made in establishing and maintaining stability in Liberia and the subregion.

The progress made against the above benchmarks has been set out in my earlier reports submitted to the Security Council pursuant to resolutions 1521 (2003) and 1579 (2004) and has also been addressed in the progress reports on UNMIL. Some of the key political and security benchmarks achieved, which have benefited from the effectiveness of the sanctions measures, the focus of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1521 (2003) and the monitoring efforts of the Panel of Experts are set out in the paragraphs below.

On the political front, in the aftermath of war, the National Transitional Government of Liberia, with the support of UNMIL, United Nations agencies and other international partners, successfully implemented key elements of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement. There has been no breach of the ceasefire since the Agreement, which has since lapsed, was signed. National elections were held successfully in November 2005 and the installation of the new Government on 16 January 2006 under President Johnson Sirleaf marked the end of the transitional process.

In terms of security, the weapons collection and demobilization process, which started in December 2003, was concluded successfully in July 2009. A total of 103,019 combatants were demobilized and 6,486,136 rounds of ammunition, 10,996 grenades and 28,314 weapons were collected and destroyed. The two main rebel groups, Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy and the Movement for Democracy in Liberia, were both dissolved.

The armed forces of Liberia too were dissolved after the war. The new national armed forces were restructured and the new recruits vetted and trained. The remaining officers of the old armed forces are currently in the process of retiring. The armed forces were under the command of an ECOWAS General from Nigeria until February 2014, when he was replaced by a Liberian Chief of Staff.

The Liberian national police has been reformed, although the personnel of the Drug Enforcement Agency, the National Security Agency, the Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization and the Executive Protection Service, formerly the Special Security Service, still have not been fully vetted and these institutions have some way to go before that important task will be completed.

In terms of the governance of the security sector, the National Defence Act (2008), for the armed forces, the National Security Reform and Intelligence Act (2011), for the National Security Agency and the Executive Protection Service, and the Drug Enforcement Agency Act (2014) were also enacted. A national security strategy published in 2008 is currently undergoing review and a defence strategy was signed in February 2014.

Given that the armed forces and the national police were undergoing reform, the Security Council decided, by its resolution 1683 (2006), that the arms embargo would no longer apply to limited supplies of weapons and ammunition intended for use by members of the national police and security forces who had been vetted and trained since the inception of UNMIL. This modification to the arms embargo was made to support the new Liberian security forces in assuming greater responsibility for national security, albeit under the continued supervision and subject to the approval of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1521 (2003).

Shortly thereafter, the Security Council increased the police component of UNMIL to intensify training activities and reduced the mission's military component. Pursuant to its resolution 1683 (2006), it also required the Government of Liberia to mark weapons and ammunition, maintain a registry of them and formally notify the Committee that those steps have been taken. It should be noted, however, that in May 2014 the Panel of Experts reported that it was still not aware of any such notifications by the Government to the Committee. Also in its resolution 1683 (2006), the Council requested UNMIL to inspect inventories of weapons and ammunition obtained to ensure that all such weapons and ammunition were accounted for. To date, UNMIL has submitted 16 weapons inspection reports to the Committee.

By its resolution 1903 (2009), the Security Council decided that arms and related materiel could be supplied to the Government as long as the supplying State notified the Committee, but that the arms embargo would continue to apply to non-State actors. The decision to continue applying the arms embargo against non-State actors was taken at a time when the situation along the border was considered to be unpredictable and the national authorities had limited capacity to control the sea and land borders, leaving Liberia vulnerable to international organized crime networks and trafficking in light weapons. Since 2009, through the various reports of the Panel of Experts and UNMIL, the Council has successfully paid sustained attention to any threat to the peace consolidation process in Liberia emanating from the border region. The arms embargo has further contributed to the consolidation of peace through its deterrent effect, making the illegal import of arms more difficult.

In its most recent resolution on the sanctions regime in Liberia, resolution 2128 (2013), the Security Council decided that the Liberian authorities would have primary responsibility for notifying the Committee of all supplies of arms.

Travel ban and asset freeze

The only measures imposed that have remained unaltered are those concerning the travel ban and the asset freeze. The total number of designated individuals on each list has gradually decreased since 2006, signalling that the threat to the stability of Liberia posed by those individuals has declined. During a meeting of the

assessment team and several national security sector agencies, an official indicated that the Government remained concerned by only one listed individual.

Panel of Experts on Liberia

Just as the Security Council has adjusted the measures imposed under its resolution 1521 (2003) in response to the situation, so too has it altered the size, scope and composition of the Panel of Experts on Liberia. In 2003, the Panel comprised five members with expertise in civil aviation, arms, diamonds, timber, the humanitarian and socioeconomic impact and finance. In July 2007, after Liberia was admitted to the Kimberley Process and one year after the ban on timber was lifted, the Council reduced the size of the Panel to three experts focusing on arms, finance and natural resources respectively. In 2014, the size of the Panel was further adjusted, following the removal of the natural resources component of its monitoring mandate. The Panel is now composed of two members with expertise in arms and finance.

Throughout its existence, the Panel has played an essential role in raising awareness about the sanctions regime, reporting on violations and drawing the attention of the Security Council to developments with the potential to threaten stability in Liberia. It has also monitored progress towards accountability and transparency in natural resources governance, arms management and border security, and has highlighted and made recommendations to close capacity gaps.

Improving the capacity of the Government of Liberia to properly manage arms and ammunition, including by enacting the necessary legislative framework

The security sector reform process in Liberia has yet to be completed. The Government of Liberia should harmonize laws relating to the security sector to ensure that the functions assigned to each agency do not conflict and that no legislation for certain security services remains outstanding. An act setting out the powers, roles and responsibilities of the national police is still pending, although a draft act is currently in the Office of the President, where it is awaiting transmittal to the Legislature. Legislation on the Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization is in the early stages of the drafting process. The Uniform Code of Military Justice has been signed by the Minister of Defence and the President, but is still awaiting ratification by the Legislature. During the state of emergency, there were reports that the national police had issued weapons to untrained officers, in violation of resolution 1683 (2006). It should be noted that in the past a number of senior officers have obtained weapons before being properly trained and vetted.

At present, Liberia has no comprehensive legislation regulating weapons and ammunition. The Legislature has ratified the ECOWAS Convention on Small Arms and Light Weapons, Their Ammunition and Other Related Materials, which bans the transfers of small arms and light weapons and related materials into or through the territory of States parties unless an exemption is granted. There is little indication, however, that the Convention is being fully implemented by the national authorities. Even if the Council prohibition on the supply of arms to non-State actors were to be adjusted, there would currently be no legal means for the Government to restrict and regulate the purchase and possession of arms.

Some progress has been made recently to address this gap in national legislation. In June 2014, the Liberia National Commission on Small Arms

submitted the draft firearms and ammunition control act to the Office of the President through the Ministry of Justice. Immediately following the assessment team's meeting with the Liberia National Commission on Small Arms, the draft legislation was forwarded to the Law Reform Commission, which may make its transmittal to the Legislature more likely. It remains doubtful, however, that the Legislature will consider the draft act before the commencement of its next regular session, in 2015.

Regulations on licensing and registration will also be required. Currently no national database of government-owned or privately owned firearms is being maintained, as required by the ECOWAS Convention. Furthermore, while the draft firearms and ammunition control act seeks to address arms management in all sectors, it is unclear whether it would be fully consistent with the legislation already governing some of the security sector agencies. The same uncertainty exists in the case of agencies whose enabling legislation has yet to be enacted.

Effective implementation of any law on arms and ammunition management requires that the responsible agencies have sufficient capacity to undertake their new functions. The draft firearms and ammunition control act places new responsibilities on the national police and the Liberia National Commission on Small Arms, both of which lack capacity in terms of human resources and technical expertise. The assessment team received from the Liberia National Commission on Small Arms a detailed needs analysis and workplan outlining core operating and logistical support requirements, training needs for staff, including in the areas of arms marking and tracing, and the need for the establishment of a central arms database. The assessment team requested, but has not received, similar planning documentation from the other security agencies in relation to arms management.

In its resolution 2128 (2013), the Security Council requested the Government of Liberia to carry out a needs-based assessment, with the assistance of UNMIL and any other relevant actors, for any future weapons purchases. The assessment team is aware that the armed forces have conducted a needs-based assessment for ammunition and explosives, but that to date no comprehensive and coordinated assessment involving all security agencies has been carried out. The assessment team is also aware that the national police has expressed a desire to acquire more firearms, as has the Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization Border Patrol Unit, which at present is unarmed. An increased interest in obtaining firearms by civilian agencies and the diffuse system of managing procurement speaks to the need for coordination among all government agencies responsible for national security.

The marking of weapons and ammunition is a requirement of the Security Council, as set out in resolution 1683 (2006) and reiterated in resolution 1903 (2009). To date, the firearms of the national police, the National Security Agency and the Executive Protection Service are only being marked by hand engraver, while the firearms of the armed forces (by far the largest armoury in Liberia) are marked only with painted numbers, a method considered insufficient by ECOWAS standards. Through a European Union-funded activity in February 2014, ECOWAS provided two marking machines and all the required equipment. The training provided was limited to familiarization, so the Liberian security institutions still lack the technical knowledge to use the machines. UNMIL has proposed carrying out a quick-impact project that would enable the Ghana National Commission on Small Arms to provide further training on how to use the marking machines. That

proposal has been suspended, however, owing to the Ebola crisis, and is unlikely to be taken up again this year.

In its resolution 2138 (2013), the Security Council placed the primary responsibility for notifications regarding future supplies of arms and ammunition on the Government of Liberia. To date, the Government is working on a submission to the Committee which is still incomplete. As the Government assumes full responsibility for weapons and ammunition management, it is important that its ability to better understand the notification process be improved. UNMIL is well placed to support the armed forces and the national police in preparing these notifications to the Committee.

Under the terms of the sanctions set out in Security Council resolutions, UNMIL undertakes quarterly inspections of all armouries established by the Government of Liberia. Those armouries belong to the armed forces, the national police, the Executive Protection Service and the National Security Agency. In general, the armouries belonging to the authorities appear to be better managed than other armouries in the region. The Ministry of National Defence has expressed its readiness to address issues pertaining to the permanent storage of explosives with support from the Mine Action Service of the United Nations, pending the availability of funding for the activity. The Government of Liberia has fully complied and cooperated with UNMIL inspections.

The Office of Disarmament Affairs, through the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa and in cooperation with UNMIL and the Mine Action Service, trained 32 officials of the Government of Liberia and armed forces officers for three days in ammunition management through a joint regional project of the Office of Disarmament Affairs and the European Union. In addition, in an assessment with the Liberia National Commission on Small Arms, the Regional Centre identified concrete needs for capacity-building in arms and ammunition management.

Recommendations on United Nations assistance and other technical assistance to the Government of Liberia

In relation to the area of arms and ammunition, the following recommendations should be considered:

(a) **The Government of Liberia must prioritize, as soon as feasible, consideration by the Legislature of the draft firearms and ammunition control act.** No further technical assistance is required to establish the national legislative framework for the proper management of arms and ammunition. **Until legislation, regulations and sufficient capacity are put in place, the Government should, by executive order, introduce a complete moratorium on the importation or possession of small arms by non-State actors;**

(b) **UNMIL should assist the Government, including the Law Reform Commission, to harmonize laws relating to the security sector to ensure that the relevant agencies are assigned appropriate powers, that there are no conflicting functions among the various security agencies and that the most appropriate accountability mechanisms are put in place;**

(c) **International assistance is required to enhance the technical, human resources and administrative capacity of the Liberia National Commission on**

Small Arms, the national police of Liberia and other national security agencies to enable them to carry out their responsibilities under the arms and ammunition management legislation. With this enhanced capacity, the Liberia National Commission on Small Arms, together with the national police and other national security agencies should, as applicable:

(i) Develop standard operating procedures and regulations for the registration and licensing of small arms;

(ii) Undertake a comprehensive weapons-marking programme involving all national security agencies;

(iii) Develop a central arms database, in accordance with internationally accepted best practice standards, in particular the International Small Arms Control Standards,[3] the General Assembly-mandated International Ammunition Technical Guidelines and the recommendations contained in my report on small arms of 22 August 2013 (S/2013/503);[4]

(iv) Conduct a baseline survey to assess national arms and ammunition stockpiles using the Register of Conventional Arms;[5]

(d) **Coordination among the agencies responsible for arms and ammunition management must be further enhanced.** As the government body whose membership comprises all the national security agencies, the Liberia National Commission on Small Arms is mandated to coordinate all aspects of government policy and practice regarding arms and ammunition management issues and should act as a central point of contact for potential donors;

(e) **The current system whereby arms embargo notifications are sent to the Committee and inspections are made by UNMIL to accompany the transfer of increased responsibility to the Government of Liberia should be maintained until the current Ebola crisis is brought under control.**

Effective monitoring and management of the border between Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire

Owing to inter-ethnic and land-related clashes and the uncertainty that followed the mass movement of fighters and refugees during the 2010-2011 Ivorian post-elections violence, the border between Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire has remained an area of specific focus by the Security Council. In the past, cross-border attacks have been mounted by dissident former fighters with the support of former Liberian militia men who had themselves been displaced during that conflict. Until 2014, there were attacks on the Ivorian side involving Liberian fighters and Ivorian militants. The most significant of the cross-border attacks led to the killing of United Nations peacekeepers in 2012.

While there has been an increase in the number of Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization personnel posted to the borders of Liberia during the past year, the Government still lacks adequately trained personnel and the logistical, communications and mobility capacity to secure its borders. Personnel of the Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization are deployed at 36 strategic border posts

[3] See www.smallarmsstandards.org.

[4] See, in particular, recommendations 1, 2, 10, 11 and 12.

[5] See www.un-register.org/NationalHoldings/Index.aspx.

and patrol the 176 identified border points along the boundaries between Liberia and its neighbours (Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea and Sierra Leone) to prevent cross-border crimes and enhance border security. The border between Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire is 716 km long and is heavily forested, making it even more challenging to monitor.

The Liberian coast guard has four small boats with a limited range and is unable to patrol the maritime border with Côte d'Ivoire. It therefore relies on UNMIL to monitor that area. Operations Restore Hope I and Restore Hope II, which were implemented in 2012 and 2013, demonstrated that the Government, even with UNMIL assistance, has limited capacity to mobilize and deploy troops, police and border guards in a coordinated manner to combat the threat posed by Ivorian militia members resident in Liberia and Liberian mercenaries along the border between Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire.

The principal intergovernmental security mechanisms are those organized through the Mano River Union and the quadripartite meetings between the Governments of Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia and the peacekeeping missions in those two countries. The last quadripartite meeting was held in Monrovia in April 2013; largely as a result of the outbreak of the Ebola virus disease, there has been no meeting in 2014.

The Mano River Union has a long-term strategy of building cross-border cooperation, in coordination with the United Nations Office for West Africa and the United Nations Development Programme, through joint border security and confidence-building units, which undertake cross-border activities. The core function of these units is to enhance cross-border security cooperation and information exchange and to promote cordial relations. While the activities of the units tend to be quite successful in the short term, their sustainability is problematic as they normally cease to operate once the seed money runs out. Activities supported by the units include cultural exchanges, cross-border markets and sports days involving several schools. The Ebola outbreak has led to the suspension of these activities, and it may be difficult to rebuild the momentum later.

The establishment and operationalization of a transnational crime unit in Liberia as part of the West Africa Coast Initiative to counter organized crime, including drug trafficking, has been supported by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, UNMIL, the United Nations Office for West Africa and the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL). Notwithstanding institutional, operational and logistical challenges to the conduct of stand-alone operations, the Liberian unit has engaged in several joint operations with other law enforcement agencies, including the Drug Enforcement Agency, the Bureau of Customs and Excise and the Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization. The unit continues to analyse intelligence and to plan and conduct operations with technical support from UNMIL and funding from UNODC.

In its resolution 2162 (2014), the Security Council called upon the Governments of Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia to continue reinforcing cooperation, particularly with respect to the border area, including through increased monitoring, information-sharing and coordinated actions, and to implement the shared border strategy to, inter alia, support the disarmament and repatriation of foreign armed elements on both sides of the border. In addition, the Council called upon all United Nations entities in Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia, within their respective mandates,

capabilities and areas of deployment, to enhance their support for the stabilization of the border area, including through increased inter-mission cooperation and the development of a shared, strategic vision and plan, in support of the Ivoirian and Liberian authorities, and to support the implementation of regional security strategies, including those of the Manu River Union and ECOWAS.

To this end, UNMIL and the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI) continue to enhance inter-mission cooperation, including with regard to the monitoring of the common border between Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire. The principal mechanism for encouraging cross-border cooperation between UNOCI and UNMIL, as well as involving the local civilian authorities and security agencies, has been Operation Mayo, which facilitates cross-border security cooperation between the authorities in both countries. In July 2014, the two missions adopted an inter-mission cooperation framework for engagement for the development of a shared strategy aimed at stabilizing the border in support of the efforts of both national authorities. That framework sets out, inter alia, ways to enhance border security and stabilization, including by curbing the illicit trafficking in drugs and firearms and boosting the capacity of the two Governments to monitor and deter possible activities by armed and illegal elements. With the drawdown of the United Nations military presences in Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia, it is envisaged that the responsibilities for Operation Mayo will increasingly be taken on by national counterparts. It should be noted that the disarmament, demobilization, repatriation and reintegration of Ivorian ex-combatants on both sides of the border continue to require a framework of cooperation between the Governments of Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire. That operation has also been suspended, however, owing to the Ebola outbreak.

As currently planned, by the end of the third phase of the military drawdown of UNMIL (mid-2015), there will be a reduction of a further 988 military personnel. This will leave UNMIL with 3,631 troops, including three battalions deployed in Monrovia and along the borders with Côte d'Ivoire and Guinea. Specifically, the drawdown will include the repatriation of the quick-reaction battalion (650 troops) and military enabling units.[6] Meanwhile, further to resolution 2162 (2014), in the event of a serious deterioration in the security situation on the ground, the UNOCI quick-reaction force could only deploy temporarily to reinforce UNMIL with the sole purpose of implementing its mandate.

The planned drawdown of UNMIL will require the Government of Liberia to increase its security agencies' capacity to take over the security role played by UNMIL in the counties. After drawdown, the Government will have sole responsibility for monitoring and patrolling the Liberian side of the border. Liberian security agencies currently suffer from many operational and logistical issues and it is evident that they severely lack equipment, vehicles, financial support, human resources and planning capacity. This situation means that there is a limited security presence in key border areas.

[6] A decision on this matter has been deferred by the Security Council for three months until 31 December 2014 (see resolution 2176 (2014)).

Recommendations on United Nations assistance and other technical assistance to the Government of Liberia

In relation to the monitoring and management of the border region, the following recommendations should be considered:

(a) Should the Security Council decide to further adjust the current arrangements for monitoring sanctions on Liberia, **it should consider enlarging the Group of Experts on Côte d'Ivoire and expanding its mandate to include cross-border issues;**

(b) **The Government, with the assistance of international partners, should expand the capacity of the Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization and continue to prioritize the deployment of the national police to the border region in line with the present transition arrangements;**

(c) **The Governments of Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire should continue to strengthen coordination and information-sharing for border security and stabilization.** A framework for cooperation between the two Governments would be required to address the disarmament, demobilization, repatriation and reintegration of Ivorian ex-combatants on both sides of the border, which has to date been supported by UNMIL and UNOCI together with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.